

THE SUPPRESSION OF QUACKS.

No feature of its many valuable activities has been more effective and directly beneficial to the public, than the steadfast policy of the State Board of Medical Examiners to suppress advertising quacks so far as money and legal machinery were available. As was pointed out in the case of Quack Chamlee of unholy fame, it is a matter of extreme difficulty to secure conviction of quacks even when caught red-handed in their quackery. This is illustrated by the notorious difficulty in securing conviction of abortionists. Cases are known where all circumstantial evidence was complete, including the corpus delicti fresh delivered, and the operator and nurse red-handed literally, and yet in the face of sworn testimony of competent witnesses, the lay jury acquits.

One has but to recall the wax works and Men's Museums of a few years ago, with their glaring electric displays, the blatant advertising of the men's specialists and similar quacks, charlatans and fakers, to realize the effective work of the Board of Medical Examiners, which has to a remarkable degree scoured such riff-raff and medical scum from the larger cities of the state. Even the daily papers show improvement in the number and boldness of the advertisements of this genus of medical parasite.

The legal work of the Board is voluminous. It includes the prosecutions of violators of the Medical Practice Act, and the closing of a large number of questionable medical offices and institutions, designing to separate the sick from their money. It has also been active in the matter of citations against violators of the Medical Practice Act. Numerous important court procedures arising from the operation of the Medical Practice Act, wherein the citation of specific provisions of the Act was to be determined, have been brought to a successful issue. The record of such work is almost endless and should receive the intelligent appreciation of every doctor.

Much remains to be done. There are always new crops of quacks growing up and new situations of quackery arising demanding new methods and new attacks. In all the Board is active and efficient. It has immensely raised the character of average medical service in the state. It has accomplished definite and important things in its program. In all of these it needs and should have co-operation and support from all doctors.

The suppression of quackery has always been handicapped by an unenlightened press. When we have a clean press, when medical advertisers and quack testimonials are eliminated from the newspapers, then the quacks will have lost their chief asset and purveyor of dupes. And also when the newspapers no longer carry such advertising, they will be more sincere in attracting strangers and tourists to this state. It is a hard thing to expect tourists to select the Golden State for their homes when its manifold excellencies are served up with a sauce of quacks, and charlatans and medical testimonials. May the State Board increase its good work of elimination until the state is thoroughly

cleaned of this scum which hangs tenaciously to its skirts.

REBATES FROM DRUGGISTS.

Not nearly all of the druggists addressed by the Journal for a statement regarding their practice in the matter of rebates to doctors have yet replied. Several, however, have replied to the effect that they do not give rebates on prescriptions and do not give stock in the drug firm as an inducement to secure prescription work from doctors. In some cases the rebate consists of a free personal account to the doctor for his own and his family's drug and toilet sundries. Sometimes the druggist renders a bill in due form, but the bill is ignored by the doctor and the druggist cannot be blamed if he does not sue for collection, when forced collection would almost certainly mean loss of all prescriptions from that doctor. Cases rarely occur where the druggist makes a handsome present to the doctor rather than give him a direct rebate on prescription fees.

In all these cases the doctor is first to blame but not solely to blame. Without question the entire matter is on a much better plane than it was even a few years ago. Improvement has been fairly rapid, and while the general practice and custom are beyond reproach, there are still a few doctors and druggists, too, who bring contumely on their profession and lay the entire profession open to reproach quite without reason. Such are they who accept or offer rebates in some such form as enumerated above. For their sins the profession suffers. It behooves the profession, therefore, to purge itself fully of this evil and ancient scourge. The few among the doctors who persist in accepting, or perchance even demanding, rebates in some form should be shamed out of their anachronistic position. And if they yield not to shame, then their official societies should take pains to show them that they and their rebating are not wanted nor tolerated in good medical and pharmaceutical society.

If all druggists agreed to give no rebates there would be no individual loss from trade turned away for lack of rebates. But vastly better yet, if no doctors would accept rebates, and if all doctors would insist on paying their just debts, there would also be a remedy for the evil, and a remedy which would be final. We are rapidly approaching socialized medicine and fuller state control of medical practice and organization. Rebating will not stand the light of public control. Let it be abolished completely and at once. Let each doctor be ashamed to accept an unpaid account, or rebate checks, or stock in the firm. Let publicity and shame do their good work. Because, while the practice is small, its odor is great and a little of it makes a great stench.

"Have you had a thought that's happy,
Boil it down.
Make it short and crisp and snappy,—
Boil it down.
When your mind its gold has minted,
Down the page your pen has sprinted,
If you want your effort printed,—
Boil it down."—Survey.